

Mark Driscoll on Whether or Not Christians Should Smoke Pot

Thursday was a big day for marijuana smokers, as it was the day pot possession became legal under Washington state law. To mark the occasion, Mark Driscoll, lead pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, published a free e-book called *Puff or Pass: Should Christians Smoke Pot or Not?*

In a blog post by the same name, Driscoll shared the book's introduction.

"Today, my home state of Washington legalizes the recreational use of marijuana," he wrote. "This decision, of course, leads to a host of pastoral questions and issues.

"I have been asked these questions for years, as Mars Hill Church has always reached out to a high (pun intended) percentage of single young guys living typical, irresponsible urban lives. These guys are generally not very theological, but curiously they tend to know at least two Bible verses."

Driscoll mentioned Genesis 1:29 (NIV): "Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth'" and Luke 3:7, which he called "the catch-all, in-case-of-guilty-emergency-break-glass verse, (paraphrased): 'Thou shall not judge.'"

The sometimes-controversial pastor said his "default answer has been Romans 13:1–7, which basically says that believers must submit to the laws of government as long as there is no conflict with the higher laws of God in Scripture."

However, now that pot is legal in his home state, Driscoll asks: "Is using marijuana sinful, or is it wise?"

He follows that by saying that although some things can be unwise even if they are neither illegal nor sinful.

“For example, eating a cereal box instead of the food it contains is not illegal or sinful—it’s just foolish,” he wrote. “This explains why the Bible speaks not only of sin, but also folly, particularly in places such as the book of Proverbs. There are innumerable things that won’t get you arrested or brought under church discipline, but they are just foolish and unwise—the kinds of things people often refer to by saying, ‘That’s just stupid.’”

In a section subtitled “Full Disclosure,” Driscoll goes on to explain that he has never touched any drug of any kind—or even taken a puff of a cigarette—but he grew up with “friends who ranged from recreational drug users to addicts.”

“Simply put,” he noted, “my view of recreational marijuana use is not motivated by guilt from my past or present, nor do I have any desire to partake in the future. I have never smoked weed, I will never smoke weed, and I will strongly urge our five children to never smoke weed. As a pastor, I would never encourage anyone to smoke weed recreationally.”

Driscoll commented that as a pastor, he’s noticed that people tend to stop maturing when they start self-medicating.

“Those who self-medicate with drugs and/or alcohol (as well as other things) often thwart maturity as they escape the tough seasons of life rather than face them. This explains why some people can be biologically much older than they are emotionally and spiritually.”

The Mars Hill pastor said he is concerned about the fact that young men are the most likely to smoke weed. He notes that they are less likely than females their age to attend college, work a job or go to church.

“For the first time in America’s history, the majority of

births to women under the age of 30 are now out of wedlock—meaning the majority of those kids have no experience of their father ever being married to their mother.

“Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 13:11 are timely, ‘When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.’ There is nothing wrong with being a boy, so long as you are a boy. But when a man acts like a boy, that’s a real problem.

He continued: “A recent article even noted that young men are now less likely than ever to own a car, as taking public transportation allows them to use their smartphone more hours every day playing video games and downloading porn. The last thing these guys need is to get high, be less motivated, and less productive; instead, they need to ‘act like men, [and] be strong’ (1 Cor. 16:13).”

In the conclusion of his blog post, Driscoll says many will try to compare usage of the drug to alcohol.

“But while the Bible does speak of alcohol, it never mentions marijuana, which means the issue requires a great deal of consideration before arriving at a thoughtful Christian position.

“All that said, I hope this ebook helps Christians think through the matter of marijuana in an informed way.”

The 36-page e-book, available for free here, was developed with help from Dr. Justin Holcomb and Docent Research Group. It can be downloaded from the website in PDF format, and is viewable on smartphones, tablets, in Web browsers or in Adobe PDF reader.